

## **Interview with Irene Williams, Rome, Mississippi, 1940**

**AFS t4011A**

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John A. Lomax: Mrs. Irene Williams continues her singing on this record.

Irene Williams: Another very interesting thing in my early childhood was the Negro baptizing. All the candidates for baptism were standing on the bank of the pond over in Mr. Bailey's pasture. Dressed in long white gowns with white caps on their heads ready to be buried in baptism. And the song as they were being led into the water by the minister was this:

#### ***Keep Your Lamp A Trimmed***

Oh, brother, keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Just like the light of God.

Oh, sister, keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Just like the light of God.

Oh, mourners, keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Just like the light of God.

Oh, sinners, keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Keep your lamp a trimmed and a burning. Just like the light of God.

And another thing that I remember on the plantation that we hadn't mentioned before was this churn song, 'Little Emma,' the baby's nurse. After the baby was tucked in bed was often called into the kitchen to do the churning. And this is the song that she sang to the milk:

#### ***Come Butter Come***

Come butter come. Mistess standing at the gate waiting for the butter cake to, Come butter come.

Come butter come, Mistess awaiting. Come butter come, Mistess awaiting. Come butter come, the Mrs. awaiting. Come butter come, the Mrs. awaiting.

Mrs. awaiting for the butter cake to, Come butter come.

Come butter come. Mrs. awaiting. Mrs. Awaiting for the butter cake to, Come butter come.

Mrs. awaiting. Come butter come. Mrs. awaiting.

And this chant would go on through until the churning was through. And the rich golden butter would come into a solid cake on the top of the milk.

John A Lomax: Well, I— [*record skips*]

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